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ABSTRACT

The 1990s saw a significant increase in the amount of technology used in the classroom and an increased need for individuals with high-tech skills. However, while this mass technology was being integrated, the human skills of instruction and advisement were being lost. Technology seemed to be negatively influencing the learning process. As a result, colleges have had to address the question of whether or not technology and academic procedures are providing an adequate learning environment. Technology should be used as a complementary part of the educational experience. At Patrick Henry Community College (Virginia), workshops and seminars in the fields of technology and interpersonal relations were scheduled to address this issue. After attending these workshops, faculty have found it easier to confer with one another and plan for better levels of service to customers; faculty are much more able to assist students with problems and questions; and students leave at graduation with credentials, certifications, and a greater knowledge of skills. Students are the direct beneficiaries of these workshops. Employers also benefit by receiving graduates with good interpersonal, problem-solving, and communication skills. (CJW)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Technicians and Interpersonal Dynamics

Instilling high touch in high tech departments

Earl R. Dodrill

Issues

In the early 1990's we saw a dramatic influx of technology integration into our local industry and a parallel increase in instructional and assistive technology in the classroom and laboratory. The need for advanced technology skills was evident. How fast do we adopt such new tools before they are thoroughly proven was a high priority issue? Once the skills were gained and the equipment integrated however, these new tools became immediately productive for both the educator and the businessman. Technology had the direct effect of supplanting many mundane routines of humanity. Had it supplanted our humanity skills was the larger issue.

Faculty was on a regular in-service training regimen for implementing many new strategies as well as new software and hardware. We were increasing our skill level considerably with integration of various technologies. We were not improving our human skills for instruction, advisement, and the sundry other duties of involved student-oriented faculty. Faculty noted, "We are getting farther from our students and they are getting farther away from us and one another." And "We have students that can 'word process' but can not write or adequately communicate with others." And " I see people on our staff in the hallways whom I hardly know. Is it like that for our students and graduates?"

Issues of academic excellence in the practice of our profession became standard dialogue in the hallway and the boardroom. In the evolution of pedagogical standards, what has been good practice to date may not gain the same results in the new paradigm. We began to search for meaningful research that could provide direction in the quest for excellence in the classroom.

Chickering and Gamson gave some insight as they noted in an AAHE bulletin that technology might be a lever for successful learning through implementation of seven fundamental principles of good educational delivery. The seven principles outlined are,

1. Good practice encourages contacts between students and faculty
2. Good practice develops reciprocity and cooperation among students
3. Good practice uses active learning techniques
4. Good practice gives prompt feedback
5. Good practice emphasizes time on task
6. Good practice communicates high expectations
7. Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning

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Thus some fundamental questions preceded our subsequent steps. We must consistently ask ourselves if the delivery systems and academic procedures are providing an engaging learning environment. How will each student be challenged to higher levels of skill and knowledge acquisition without the student and teacher being frustrated with unfamiliar, untried, and unproven tools? Further, the teacher must be energized and engaged in learning the fine points of the discipline they espouse, however we must be assured that they are not hindered in doing so with

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pedagogical pronouncements of this tool must be integrated into your portfolio of techniques. The teacher must be allowed the freedom to choose the skill or tool that best fits the situation. "What a difference it can make if teachers stress connected knowing over segregated knowing .....Teaching conducted upon the connected model will help students develop the 'aha' spirit."(Parnell p69) The educator-leader must provide ample exposure and practice to the proper use of each skill and tool for that selection to meet our vision for the integration of instructional technology. Our college has set ambitious goals for the institution to adopt advanced techniques of instruction, integrate current instructional technology, deliver relevant professional development activities, and meet the needs of each student. These four pillars form the mission and vision for today while readying us for tomorrow.

Cultural change is sure to come, as change itself is a verity, however as leaders we must be patient in our leadership to higher plains and better pastures. A byproduct of a swift, get-there-at-all-cost assent up *technology-mountain* may be a few lost teacher and learner pilgrims. Have we any to spare?

Technology faculties are some of the busiest people I know. Learning new skills within an expanding discipline, implementing new software and hardware in labs while maintaining the integrity of their labs. It is easy for such individuals to lose contact with the remainder of the campus. We suggest that it may be the same for any person delving into the technical arena. Students of traditional academic courses as well as those entering highly technology-based professions may be overwhelmed by instructional technology that is not thoughtfully managed. Many students learning styles will not accommodate remote asynchronous instruction. Howard Gardner has outlined for us eight "intelligences". It may be fairly argued that at least six will accommodate only face-to-face synchronous learning. Consider the implications on learning for each of the following; Naturalistic Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, Logical-Mathematical Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, and Linguistic Intelligence.

The debate of at least the early portions of this century will be the integration of technology into the classroom. The extent to which we engage it will be pondered. The impact that it has on education and learning processes will be argued. The consideration that each educational theory attempted and applied drastically affects for good or evil an entire cohort group if not generation. Technology and the use of technology are or will be the as much a part of an educated person as reading writing and mathematics. Dr. Lawrence Jones has published widely on the concept of Job Skills for the 21st Century. He embraces change and engages the individual in reflecting upon the changes inherent to success in the workplace. The four groups of skill sets he advocates are Basic, Thinking, People, and Personal skills. With his others contributions to this thinking the question should be asked, "If we go completely in the direction of asynchronous instructional technology, where will students learn diversity skills, team skills, verbal communication skills, listening and taking direction skills, interpersonal skills, and the physical manipulation of equipment? Can a computer replace a teacher and become the teacher in and of itself?"

A Multi-Faceted Solution

First a Divisional goal was set to increase our Technology ***(including of Humanity)*** Skills. We planned workshops and seminars, which emphasized a complementary experience for the requisite

high tech in-service programs. "High touch" skills and attitudes became the focus of these alternative activities.

Examples include:

- Dr. Daniel E. Vogler, of Virginia Tech, provided our first significant workshop of this type, "***problem solving skills and their implementation in curriculum.***"
- Faculty and staff attend Pryor Report seminars on personal skill development or related issues.
- Motivational books, videos, and publications are purchased, reviewed, shared, and discussed in division meetings.
- Such bi-monthly publications such as ***The Professor*** (by Robert L. DeBruyn) or books like ***The Monster Under the Bed*** (by Davis and Botkin) and ***LogoLearning*** (by Parnell) provide some dynamic dialogue.
- Recognition of excellence in the classroom is touted at each Division meeting through sharing best practices, successful techniques, publication (not required by Virginia Community Colleges), and awards or recognition by professional associations
- Annual day long full faculty planning retreat by division
- Mentor program for new and adjunct faculty
- "Brown Bag" forums for faculty and students to engage a topic of the day
- Individualized Professional development plan with "Human Quotient" goals
- Faculty/Staff social each month to meet and greet each one

Requisite Technology training includes:

- VCCS Courseware grants to develop distance courses and faculty skills with technology as well as promote inter-collegiate course development
- A Tri-level Technology Initiative to recognize acquisition of instructional technology skills
- BlackBoard and NetG web-based training and activities
- Graduate Courses provided for intact faculty teams (including adjuncts)
- Challenge grants from the college foundation to encourage integration of technology and translation of traditional pedagogy to technology based techniques
- Standard computer application software training
- Cooperative activities in development of short and long range goals for integration of technology, maintenance of technology, and instructional priorities

The in-service programs appeared to be successful thus the faculty, staff, and I began looking for other ways to improve our skills and attitudes. We found many avenues of support and encouragement for developing our Technology and Technology of Humanity skills. The Virginia Community College System professional development grants provided some of the funding and encouragement to continue on our quest for the technology of humanity skills that we deemed vital to our success.

A strategy coming from the divisional goal was to recognize excellence in a variety of ways. Each divisional meeting begins with recognition of articles published, awards received, professional activities noted by peers, and community leadership efforts that improve the quality of life. College-wide recognition is given annually for outstanding new faculty and a second for the outstanding veteran of five years or more. The division enthusiastically submits nominees each year.

Because of the diversity in disciplines, curriculum and lab demands, and diversity in classroom schedules, faculty and staff often feel isolated and distant from each other. A new faculty member could easily be on staff a year or more and not have met 50% of the division. Thus, we have instituted a monthly social hosted by individual departments to just get together. The format requires no business to be discussed and emphasis is on camaraderie. The concept has been very successful for us with volunteered continuation each year as departments request their turn to be host.

An annual end of term one-day retreat is also provided each year. The retreat engages the entire faculty and staff in visioning, planning, and sharing ways of providing an even better level of service for our "customers" the following year. A planning team works each year in the development of an agenda with engaging activities to ensure fun and productivity.

Finally, all faculty members are academic advisors. In seeking to be client oriented, a faculty may be expected to assist a student with a number of academic problems. Thus, often a student not enrolled within a given program area will require assistance with developing their semester schedule and meeting the requirements of the selected program of study. Occupational-Technical programs are dynamic in maintaining current standards and remaining abreast of the evolution of technology and thought or theory within their field. A given program of study will change courses required for graduation, textbooks, content, or instructional delivery methodology regularly. This can lead to confusion for part-time students and advisors not directly involved within the program or technical field seeking to ensure completion in a timely manner.

In each monthly division meeting, a program of study is showcased to assist with the problems of advisement noted above. Faculty will demonstrate or relate instructional best practices during the meeting. Any changes in program requirements are illustrated and carefully reviewed. With the onset of distance education courses that are web-based or founded in an emerging technology, it is increasingly important that collegial criticism be allowed. New distance courses may be introduced and reviewed by peers for content, purpose and delivery methodology.

We have learned

Computers in every classroom, lab and faculty office will not in and of itself guarantee excellence in neither instruction nor a desired learning community environment. We have many existing and several underdevelopment Distance Learning courses, all of which have undergone or will undergo rigorous review prior to delivery, yet the traditional classroom remains the first choice for the vast majority. We have adopted the policy of recognized certification at industry standards for each program that deliver one. Graduates leave with college credentials and industry certifications, which ensures their viability in the labor market. Our college faculty and staff have embarked upon a one hundred percent achievement of MOUS certification. Distance courses and some classroom courses have implemented BlackBoard software solutions for course delivery. Uniform approach to delivery assists the students in navigating through their educational goals with the least impediment

possible. A strong resolve for total connectivity to public schools, libraries, off-campus sites, and the general public has resulted in an ability to meet the special needs of our constituents.

Where we plan to be tomorrow

We will provide a high touch high tech experience in learning that considers each student individually. The digital divide envisioned (by some) today may be avoided by the realistic long-range planning and full support of the nation's community colleges. We will one day engage in profit centers that rival the corporate academies springing up to meet needs gone unmet by traditional institutions. A wireless environment will come into play that allows learning connected to vast resources anytime, anywhere.

The Beneficiary

The students are the direct beneficiaries of the many activities. The curriculum of all divisional programs has adopted general education content requirements, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. A senior thesis has been adopted by two of Associate Degree programs in which both research and writing skills are emphasized. Programs require additional writing, speaking, and interpersonal or team based projects. A steady improvement in exit test scores in writing and thinking skills has been noted. Graduate surveys indicate an increased appreciation for their academic attainment. The Associate degree nursing program reports steadily improving scores on problem solving and psychology skill segments on standardized testing for licensure. Follow-up graduate and employer surveys indicate increased satisfaction with so called soft skills for success in the workforce.

Employers' benefit by graduates with strong interpersonal, communication, and problem solving skills. Employees' benefit with stronger soft skills required for success in today's workforce. The entire workforce benefits with each individual having the "learning skills" that encourage lifelong learning practices and that provide abilities to adapt to changes in business practices.

Faculty and staff benefit in gaining the timely information needed for quality of academic life as well as delivering improved instructional strategies and advisement. Each person gains in knowing more about their neighbors' and colleagues' pathways to success. Reduced isolation and distance brings in-touch humans to the technology roundtable with creativity to accomplish more through the advanced technology available and the Technology of Humanity skills gained.

Mr. Dodrill is the Chairman of the Applied Science and Engineering Technology Division at Patrick Henry Community College in Martinsville, Virginia. He has worked in the Virginia Community College System for approximately nineteen years. He has been a faculty member, a Department Chair, and currently a Division Chairman. He serves on several area public school vocational technical advisory councils, is a regional Tech-Prep director, is a member of a Local Workforce Investment Board, and chaired a regional economic development council. In these capacities he observes first hand the issues impacting education in technical disciplines and technology integration in the workplace.

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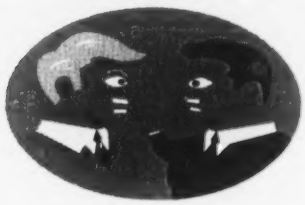
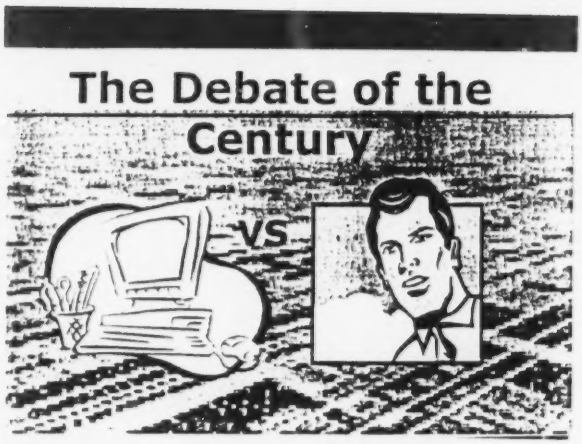
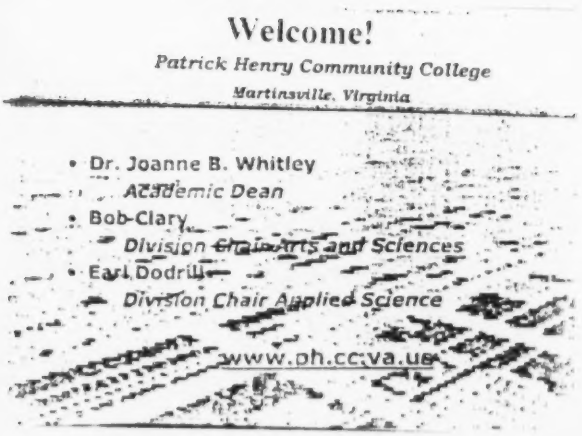
TOMORROW'S TOPIC

TODAY'S DEBATE







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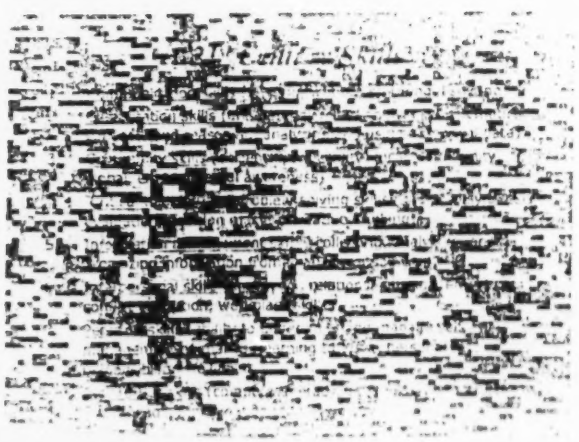
Our Visioning Process

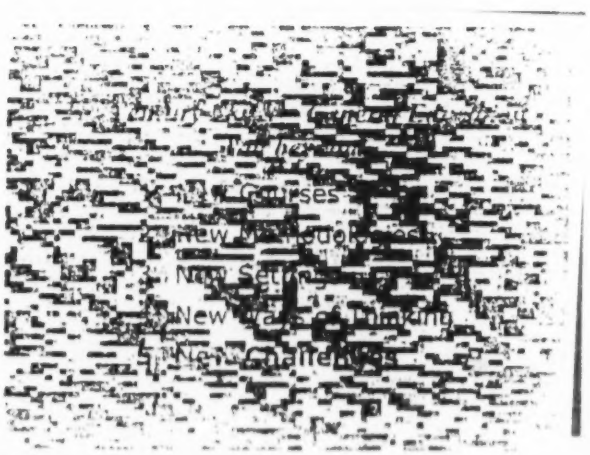
- Shared Vision—community based
- Master Planning—academic, technology, fiscal, physical
- Benchmark Excellence (state & nation)
- Annual Retreat—college-wide reps
- Annual Summative reports of progress

Write it down and it will happen!

Our Vision

The vision of Patrick Henry Community College is to be indisputably recognized as the most effective community college in the Commonwealth of Virginia and as a nationally prominent two-year educational institution. We will be known as an innovative, continually improving leader and a catalyst for community advancement. Through creative leadership, visionary planning, and a commitment to excellence, we aspire to be an exceptional lifelong learning center that creates our students and community success in a changing global society.





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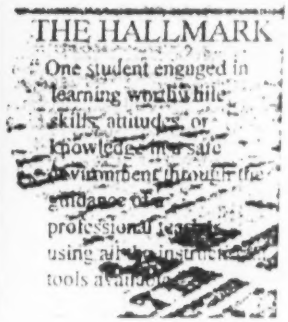
THE HUMAN QUOTIENT



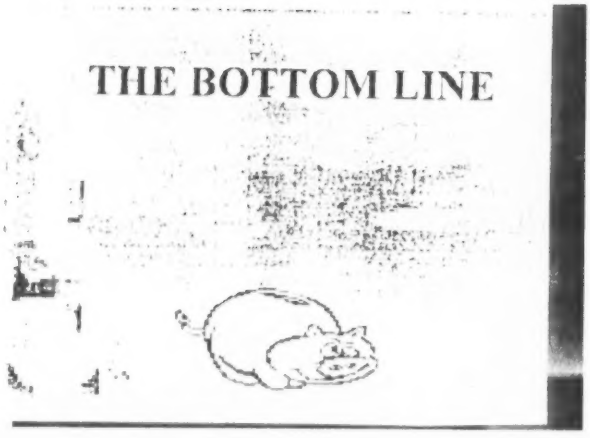
Where We Are

- Computers in Every Classroom & Office
- Over 90 Distance Learning Courses
- Investing $500,000+ annually in technology
- NetG and Blackboard available for instruction
- Certification programs
- Faculty certification training ongoing
- Off Campus connectivity

Where We are Going

- Development of on-line programs
- Inclusion in Virginia's state-wide efforts in DL
- Profit Centers
- Video streaming to the desk top
- Master teacher delivery of course-work to Public Schools and Regional Businesses
- Constant upgrade of instructional technologies
- Wireless technology

THE BOTTOM LINE



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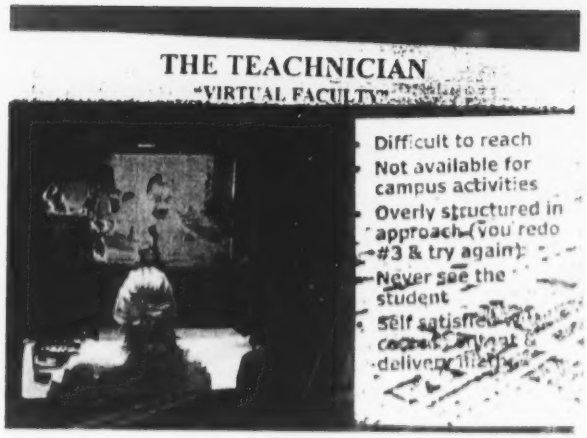
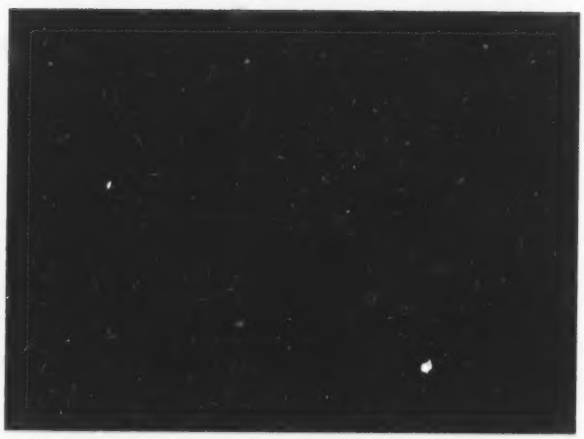

THE TEACHNICIAN
"VIRTUAL FACULTY"
Difficult to reach
Not available for campus activities
Overly structured in approach (You redo #3 & try again)
Never see the student



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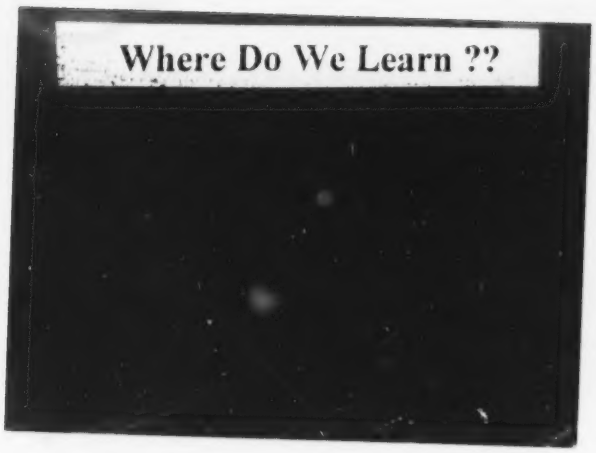

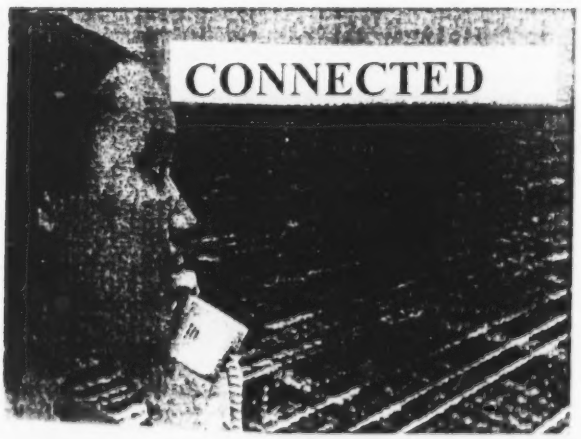

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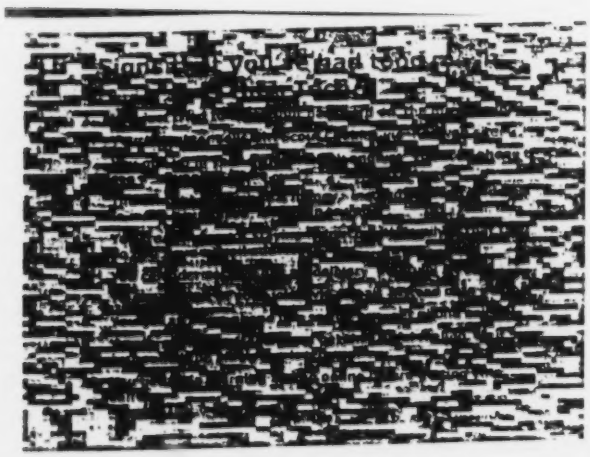
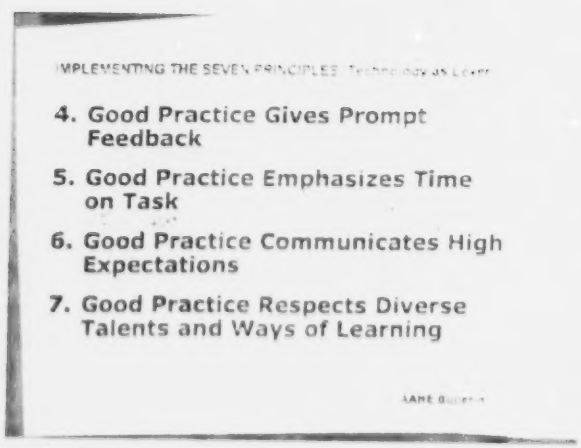


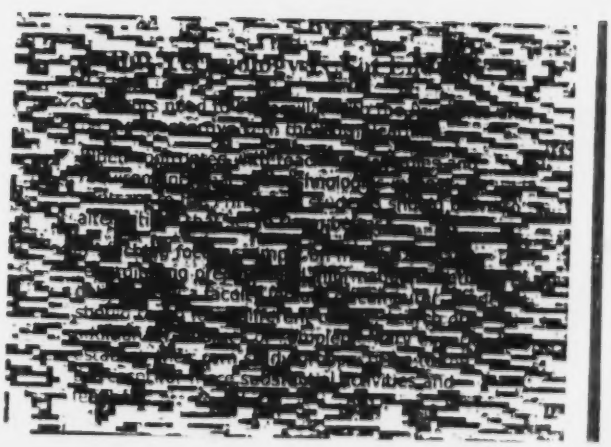
IMPLEMENTING THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES:
Technology as Lever
by Arthur W. Chickering and Stephen C. Ehrmann

1. Good Practice Encourages Contacts Between Students and Faculty
2. Good Practice Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students
3. Good Practice Uses Active Learning Techniques



IMPLEMENTING THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES: Technology as Lever

4. Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback
5. Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task
6. Good Practice Communicates High Expectations
7. Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning



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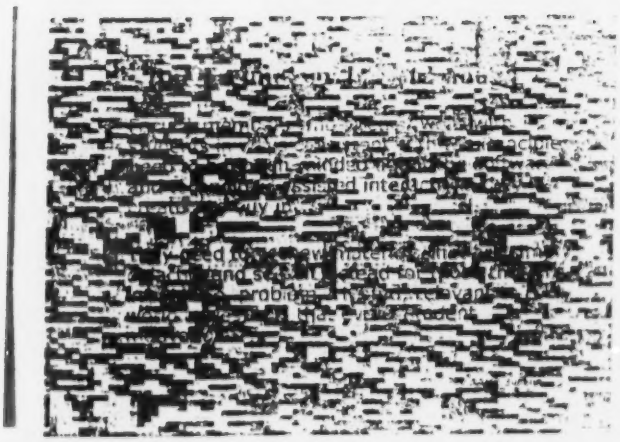

Technology is Enough..

When:

- It is used as a tool to enhance learning,
- Prepared students are engaged in it,
- It is used at the level of one's mastery,
- It is strategically planned into the institution,
- Adequate professional development is provided and sought, &
- *It functions!*

Instructional Technologies Strategies

- **Ten Best Practices showcased each year**
- **Courseware grants**
- **Technology initiative**
- **In-service activities**
- **PHCC Web-site workbook**
- **Instructional technology development personnel**
- **Blackboard and NetG access**
- **Long range (five year) technology plan**
- **Challenge Grants for faculty to develop new and innovative pedagogy**
- **Graduate courses for faculty groups provided on-campus**
- **Peer group meetings**
- **TLT group**

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Human Quotient Strategies

- **Annual Planning Retreat**
- **Individualized professional development plan**
- **Monthly staff/faculty social hosted by an academic department**
- **Benchmark excellence at peer institutions**
- **Acknowledgement of outstanding contributions**
- **Inter-disciplinary curriculum development**
- **Academic Excellence Committee**
- **"Brown Bag" forums for student and faculty exchanges**
- **Mentor program for new and adjunct faculty**
- **General Education objectives added to Occupational-Technical courses**